NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire

Stanton

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2003, the Joint Senior Management Committee (JSMC) began to formalize a process of evaluating consumer's satisfaction with the health and social services system. The project was a collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Authorities as part of their ongoing commitment to evaluation and quality assurance. It also addressed Action Plan Item 5.1.4 – a commitment by the Minister of Health and Social Services to conduct a client satisfaction survey.

JSMC felt it would be best to get feedback from persons using two distinct parts of the system – hospitals and community health centres/social services offices.

In order to address these distinct parts of the system, two different questionnaires and collection methods were used. The Northwest Territories (NWT) Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed to help measure consumer's satisfaction with the four hospitals in the NWT, while the Community Health and Social Services Client Feedback Form was provided at health centres and social services offices.

This report focuses on the results of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire and is specific to Stanton.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND DATA LIMITATIONS

A hospital satisfaction working group was established with a project lead from the Department of Health and Social Services and representatives selected by the Chief Executive Officers from each hospital. In consultation with senior management, hospital staff, the NWT Bureau of Statistics and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services, the working group finalized the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

It was recognized early in the process that budget and human resource constraints limited the choices available for the questionnaire methodology. A self-administered questionnaire was the only option available given these constraints. Recognizing that self-administered questionnaires have lower response rates than telephone and/or in-person interviews by trained interviewers, the working group concentrated efforts of getting buy-in and cooperation from front-line hospital staff for questionnaire distribution.

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was distributed at the four hospitals in the Northwest Territories during the month of October 2004. Patients were provided a questionnaire and encouraged to complete it by front-line hospital staff. Completed questionnaires were returned to the Department where data entry, analysis and the final reports were completed.

The voluntary and self-administered methodology of the questionnaire resulted in valuable feedback from those who responded to the questionnaire, but does not necessarily provide a representative sample.

The limitation of using a questionnaire with a volunteer bias, rather than a randomly selected representative sample, is data from each hospital must be approached with caution, response rates cannot be calculated and the data cannot be calculated from a territorial perspective.

The findings from these questionnaires can be used to:

- provide feedback to senior management and hospital staff;
- recognize areas that are working well;
- indicate areas of improvement;

- provide a component of the hospital accreditation process;
- serve as baseline data for future client satisfaction measurements.

A total of 826 completed questionnaires were received from people utilizing Stanton during the month of October.

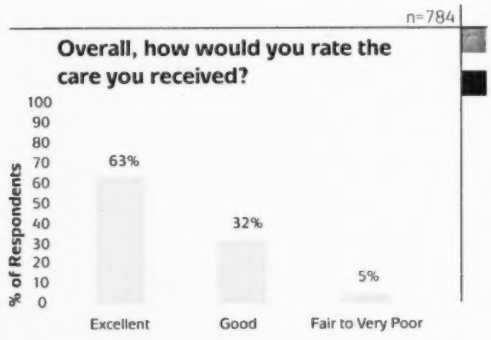
The majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good for *every* question asked on the Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Similarly, the majority of comments provided by respondents were also positive. At Stanton, 559 respondents (68%) provided comments on their questionnaires.

MEASURES OF HOSPITAL SATISFACTION

OVERALL SATISFACTION

The question that asked, **"Overall, how would you rate the care you received?"** provides a concise summary of the overall findings of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction questionnaire. The vast majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good - a clear indication of their satisfaction with the services provided at the hospital.



- A total of 784 respondents provided ratings for this question (n=784).
- Approximately 95% of respondents rated the overall care they received as good or excellent and 5% said fair to very poor.

The following quote summarizes the general findings of the NWT Hospital Questionnaire at Stanton and the high level of satisfaction:

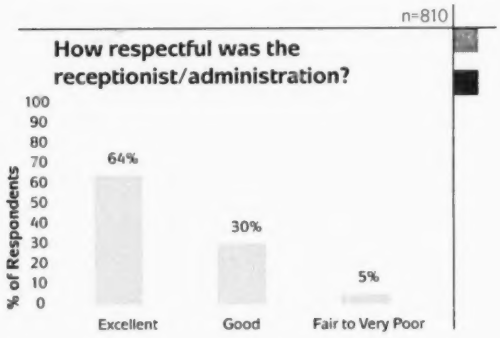
> *All staff (receptionist/administration, nurses, doctors, specialized care staff, and treatment/procedure staff) are always very caring and respectful. I have always received the very best of care. Thank you one and all!*

Italics in this report indicate comments taken directly from the questionnaires. To protect anonymity of either the respondent or hospital staff, deletions have been indicated with the use of square brackets []. Additions for clarity of quotes have also been noted with the use of square brackets.

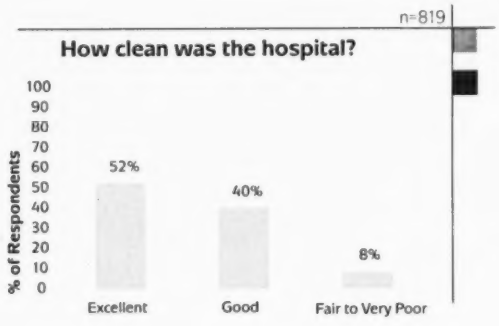
Some percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

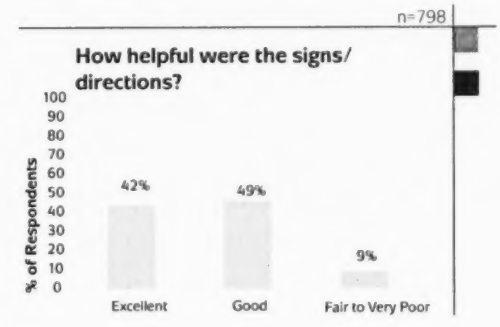
This section of the questionnaire asked five questions dealing with general services related to the hospital.



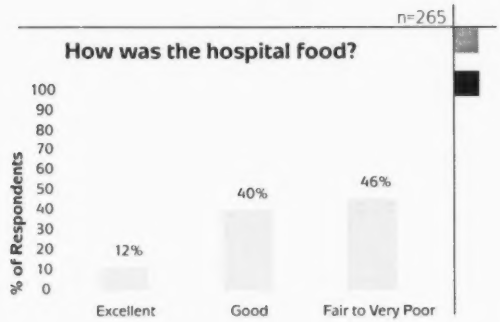
- 94% of respondents rated respectfulness as good or excellent. Positive comments related to reception included it being courteous and friendly.
- Fair to very poor ratings were given by 5% of respondents.



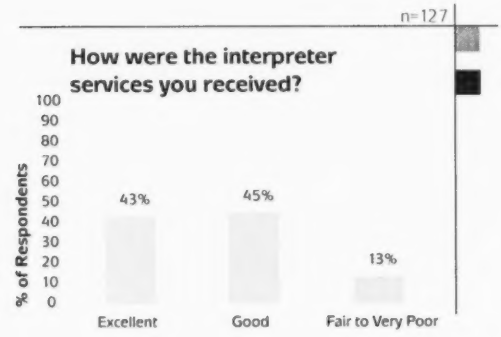
- 8% of respondents rated cleanliness as fair to very poor while 92% of respondents rated cleanliness as good or excellent.



- 91% of respondents said the signs/directions were good or excellent.
- 9% stated the signage was fair to very poor. Comments relating to poor signage included the need for signs by the elevator to indicate floor number, confusion over the elevators' rear doors and signage by the elevators being too busy.



- 46% of respondents rated the hospital food as fair to very poor - the lowest level of satisfaction on the questionnaire. Comments reflecting these lower rating included suggestions of more variety, more quantity and tastier food.
- However, when excellent or good responses are combined, half of the respondents (52%) were satisfied with the hospital food.

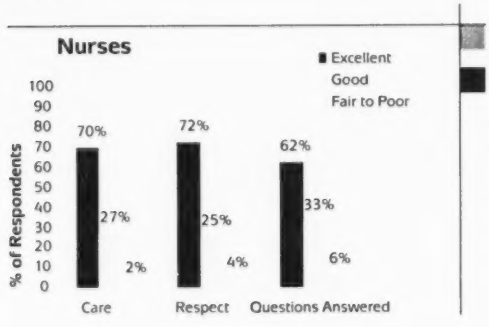


- 88% of respondents said the interpreter services were good or excellent while13% said the services were fair to very poor.
- Comments suggesting improvements to interpreter services included the accessibility and availability of interpreters.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The Health Care Provider section of the questionnaire was divided into three types of health care providers: nurses, doctors and specialized health care provid . Similar questions were asked of each type of health care provider.

Nurses



- The high level of respondent satisfaction with nurses was evident in the three questions directly related to nursing.
- Questions relating to care, respect and how the nurses answered questions all received good or excellent ratings of 95% or higher.

What do you think about the care you received from the nurses?

- A total of 594 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- Many positive comments reflected the 97% of respondents who rated the nursing care as good or excellent. These included comments about the helpfulness, friendliness and professionalism of nurses.
- A few comments were reflective of the 2% of the respondents who said the nursing care was fair to very poor and suggested that the attitude of some nurses needed improvement.

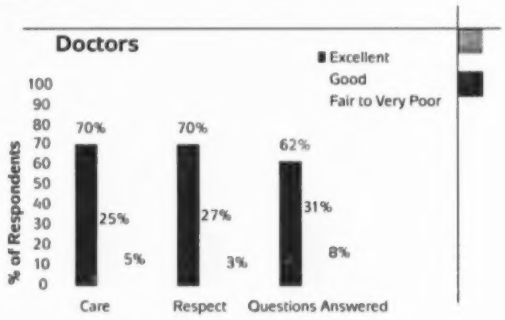
How respectful were the nurses?

- A total of 595 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- The question on nurses' respectfulness received the highest excellent rating of the questionnaire - 72%.

How well did the nurses answer your questions?

- A total of 559 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- In response to how well the nurses answered questions, 95% of respondents said good or excellent and 6% said fair to poor.

Doctors



- Respondents also indicated good or excellent ratings of 93% or higher for the three questions directly related to doctors.

What do you think about the care you received from the doctors?

- A total of 598 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- The majority of comments related to the care provided by doctors reflected the 95% of respondents who said good or excellent. For example: *Very informative, respectful and made sure your needs were met.*

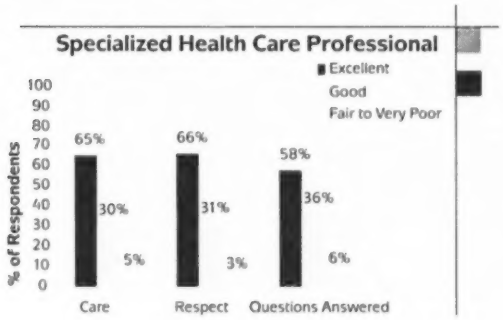
How respectful were the doctors?

- A total of 606 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- 97% of respondents rated the respectfulness of the doctors as good or excellent.

How well did the doctors answer your questions?

- A total of 588 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- 8% of respondents rated the doctors answering their questions as fair to very poor while 93% provided good or excellent ratings.

Specialized Care (For example: blood work, x-ray, physiotherapy, stress test etc.)



- Similar to the questions on the care, respect and how well nurses and doctors answered questions, specialized care providers at Stanton also received very high ratings of satisfaction from respondents.

What do you think about the care you received from the specialized care professional (for example, the lab technologist who drew your blood, the physiotherapist)?

- A total of 596 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- Many comments reflected the 95% of respondents who rated the care from specialized care professionals as good or excellent. Some were general comments: *Very professional and personable.* Other comments were specific to the service area.

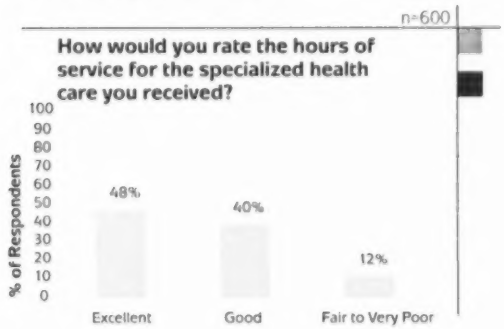
How respectful were the specialized health care professionals?

- A total of 623 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- 97% of respondents rated the respectfulness of the specialized health care professionals as excellent or good.

How well did the specialized health care professionals answer your questions?

- A total of 576 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- 94% of respondents rated the answering of their questions by specialized health care professionals as good or excellent.

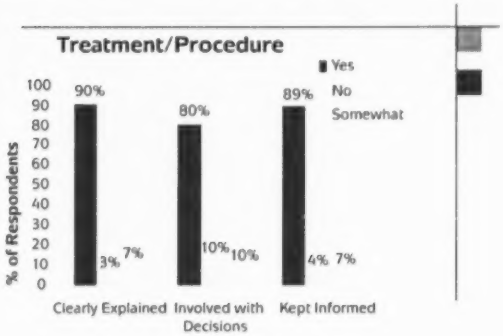
Respondents were also asked, **"How would you rate the hours of service for the specialized health care you received?"**



- 88% of respondents rated the hours of service for specialized health care as good or excellent.
- Suggestions for improving the hours of service included expanding the daily hours to include early mornings, evenings and/or weekends.

TREATMENT/PROCEDURE

The questionnaire asked respondents three questions related to their treatment/procedure.



- The vast majority of respondents (80% or higher) indicated that their treatments/procedures were clearly explained, that they were involved in the decisions affecting their care and that they were kept informed about the care planned for them.

Was your treatment/procedure clearly explained to you?

- A total of 677 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- Only 3% of respondents said their treatment/procedure was not clearly explained, with 97% saying yes or somewhat.

Were you involved in decisions affecting your care?

- A total of 573 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- A higher number of respondents felt they were not involved in decisions affecting their care - 10%.

Were you kept informed about the care planned for you?

- A total of 597 respondents provided ratings for this question.
- 93% of respondents responded yes or somewhat on being kept informed about the care planned for them.

FEEDBACK

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked two open-ended questions to gather more detailed information from respondents:

- **Tell us about the things we are doing well; and**
- **Tell us about the areas in which we could improve.**

Comment sections were also provided following the General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure sections and at the end of the questionnaire. At Stanton, 558 respondents (68%) provided comments on their questionnaires. Some respondents provided multiple comments in more than one section of the questionnaire; therefore the count of comments exceeds 558.

The following is a summary of the comments provided by respondents using Stanton hospital.

Tell us about the things we are doing well:

The highest number of positive comments related to staff. Approximately 397 comments, or 45% of the 875 positive comments, directly or indirectly praised the staff at the hospital.

Indirect praise or general comments towards staff included things such as:

Mahsi cho for a job well done. Hope I don't come back. But I'm sure going to miss everyone's kindness.

Everyone was helpful and understanding.

"Friendly", "professional", "knowledgeable", "caring" and "helpful" were common phrases used to describe staff.

Praise was also directed towards staff in specific service areas as well as towards specific staff members. Respondents included the names of individual nurses, doctors and specialized health care professionals in noting exceptional service.

Respondents also provided general comments on the service they received. Positive praise were reflected in the 214 comments such as:

Thanks for the great service.

Very good!

Always have great service here.

Good communication was another area in which respondents felt the hospital was doing well (126 comments). These comments included respondents appreciating the care displayed by staff during their visit:

The communication indicates a sense of caring.

Took the time to alleviate my 3 year old's fears. Thank you!

Communication was also praised in relation to the medical care the respondent received:

It is so helpful when the doctor calls with results.

Explaining things and reinforcing what is going to occur. Same questions by three different people - demonstrated follow-through and preventable measures.

Respondents noted short wait times and efficiency in 55 comments. These included appreciation for the availability of appointments and prompt service. One respondent wrote:

Customer/patient care seems to be the most important thing. Days off, weekends were not even considered.

Treatment and/or procedures received 28 positive comments such as appreciation for improvement to the respondent's health and that efforts were continuing to find answers.

The facility was singled out for praise in 23 different comments. This included notes about its cleanliness, maintenance and comments such as:

The very reasonable rates in the cafeteria and the extra advantage that you don't have to pay for parking.

Positive comments also related to administration and/or process. Approximately 21 comments offered praise for things like being accommodating while scheduling appointments, the use of cancellation lists to get appointments sooner, smooth transition during shift changes and using support staff to maximize professional staff's availability for primary health care.

Other positive comments (11 in total) were directed towards the food (7 positive comments) and general, miscellaneous comments such as:

The satisfaction survey is a step in the right direction. It is very important to monitor the hospital performance and satisfaction of the clients we serve and to exceed their expectations.

Tell us about the areas in which we could improve:

Cited most often under the need for improvement were comments regarding wait times (98 comments). These included comments about the length of time to get an appointment and/or to receive the service, appointments not starting at the set time and the feeling of being rushed during the time with the health professional.

Closely related to wait time, 21 additional comments addressed the need for more staff. Suggestions included the hiring of nearly every type of health care professional in order to reduce waiting times as well as staff workload.

The two categories of wait times and the need for more staff represented 25% of all suggestions for improvement (119 of 474).

Approximately 54 comments were directed towards problems perceived in administration and/or process. Comments included the need for continuity of care through the retention of health care professionals, ensuring patient confidentiality, issues related to the admitting procedure and concerns about financial constraints affecting health care.

Staff were noted in 52 comments suggesting improvement was needed. The majority of these comments were related to improving attitude and empathy. For example:

So far, so good, but it seems the staff only minds their Ps & Qs when surveys come out.

Overall, service is fine but there is always room for improvement. Maybe staff can have more workshops to remember what it is like to be a patient or family members of patients. It can be disorientating to go to the hospital.

The need for improvements within the facility were noted in 44 comments. These included respondents indicating the need for wider doors, general maintenance and improvements to waiting rooms including: larger spaces, no televisions, updated materials and cleaner/more comfortable chairs.

Additional comments suggested improvements to:

- parking (37 comments);
- signage (24 comments);
- food (23 comments);
- improved hours (17 comments); and
- cleanliness (17 comments).

Improved communication was indicated in 43 comments. Suggestions included improving communication between health professionals, ensuring the patient clearly understands and keeping the patient better informed. For example:

You use certain medical terms that are hard for the average person to understand.

Greater review of medical history to establish clear communication.

Approximately 24 comments were directed towards treatment/procedure. These comments included respondents experiencing difficulty with a procedure and frustration over diagnosis.

Comments were also provided suggesting improvements to translator services (6 comments), specific service areas (4 comments) and concern over how health care dollars are spent (2 comments).

Two comments were also directed towards the questionnaire, including:

Will the comments/suggestions really be taken seriously and into account?

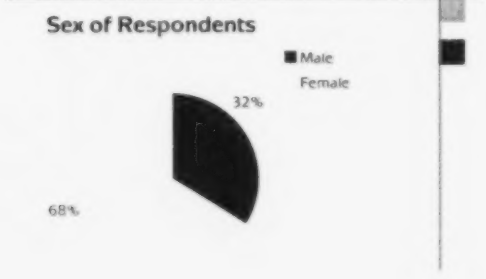
Miscellaneous comments (6) were also provided suggesting improvements or actions respondents thought the hospital should take. These included:

They should pursue land options around the hospital to consider accommodations for locums and other short-term staff.

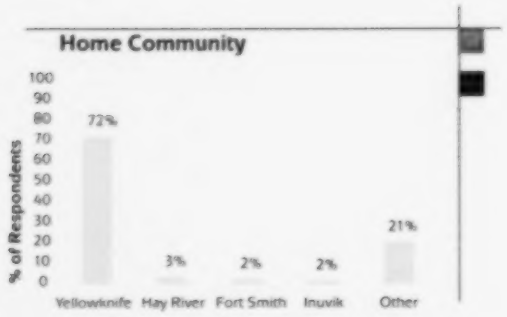
Would Stanton ever consider having the occasional open house in specific areas where the public could get a tour and see equipment and hear how their tax dollars are spent. For example, a tour in x-ray, mammogram, ultrasound.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic questions were asked to provide more detailed analysis and comparisons of questionnaire responses where applicable. The demographic also provided information on the 826 respondents who completed questionnaires at Stanton.



- Respondents were asked for their sex, home community, ethnicity and age.
- A total of 802 respondents indicated whether they were male or female.

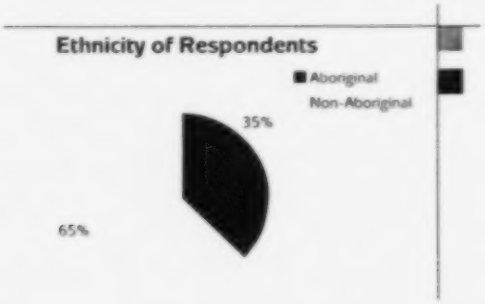


- The majority of respondents were from Yellowknife.
- A total of 797 respondents provided their home community.

The high non-response rate for the question on ethnicity indicates the sensitivity of this issue - 166 respondents (20%) did not indicate if they were Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal.

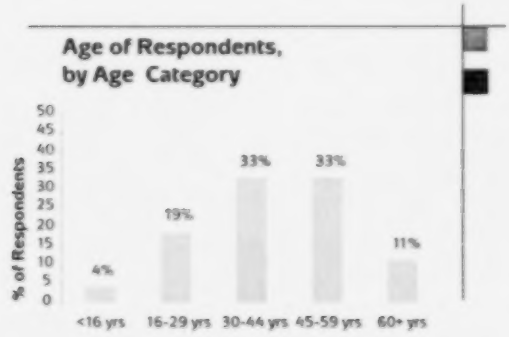
Some respondents provided comments directly on the questionnaire indicating their reasoning behind leaving the question blank:

Canadian!



- A total of 660 respondents indicated their ethnicity.

The original intent of the questionnaire was to be distributed to people 16 years and older. Questionnaires were received where the age completed was under 16. In some cases, parents completed the questionnaire on behalf of a child receiving the hospital services and put in the child's age (for example 1 year old).



- All completed questionnaires were included in the analysis.
- Excluding the under 16 age category, the average age of respondents was 43 years.
- The age ranged to 88 years old.
- A total of 789 respondents indicated their age.

CONCLUSION

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked respondents general questions relating to reception/administration, hospital cleanliness, signage, hospital food and interpreter services. Respondents also provided ratings relating to the care, respect and communication experienced in their treatment/procedure and dealings with health care professionals.

In all of these sections of the questionnaire - General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure - the majority of the 826 total respondents were satisfied with the care they received from Stanton. This satisfaction was reflected in the fact that 95% of respondents said that overall, the care they received was excellent or good.

The majority of comments provided by respondents also reflected the quality of service provided. Hospital staff in particular received numerous comments praising their professionalism and caring attitudes. While some respondents offered suggestions for change and the need for improvement, the majority of comments reflected the high levels of satisfaction found in every question.